

Serial No.: 09/972,756
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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please add the following new claims:

13. (New) A method comprising:

- B2*
- a) incubating a reaction mixture comprising
 - i) a candidate agent;
 - ii) an NS5A polypeptide; and
 - iii) a PKR protein kinase polypeptide; and
 - b) assaying for a difference in a property in the presence of said candidate agent as compared to said property in said reaction mixture incubated in the absence of said candidate agent,

wherein said difference in said property is indicative of the ability of said candidate agent to modulate the interaction of said NS5A polypeptide with said PKR protein kinase polypeptide.

14. (New) A method comprising:

- a) providing a cell comprising a nucleic acid encoding an NS5A polypeptide and a nucleic acid encoding a PKR protein kinase polypeptide, wherein said NS5A and said PKR protein kinase can be expressed in said cell;
- b) introducing into said cell a candidate agent; and
- c) assaying for a difference in a property in the presence of said candidate agent as compared to said property in said reaction mixture incubated in the absence of said candidate agent in said cell,

wherein said difference in said property is indicative of the ability of said candidate agent to modulate the interaction of said NS5A polypeptide with said PKR protein kinase polypeptide in said cell.

15. (New) The method according to claims 13 or 14, wherein said difference in said property is determined by assaying a decreased level in the binding of said NS5A polypeptide to said PKR protein kinase polypeptide, as compared to the level of binding of said NS5A polypeptide in the absence of said candidate agent, wherein said decreased level in the binding of said NS5A polypeptide to said PKR protein kinase polypeptide is indicative of the ability of said candidate agent to modulate the binding of said NS5A polypeptide to said PKR protein kinase polypeptide.

16. (New) The method according to claims 13 or 14, wherein said difference in said property is determined by assaying an increase in the level of dimerization of said PKR protein kinase polypeptide, as compared to the level of dimerization of said PKR protein kinase polypeptide in the absence of said candidate agent, wherein said increase in the level of dimerization of said PKR protein kinase polypeptide is indicative of the ability of said candidate agent to modulate the interaction of said NS5A polypeptide with said PKR protein kinase polypeptide.

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17. (New) The method according to claims 13 or 14, wherein said difference in said property is determined by assaying an increase in the level of phosphorylation of a substrate as compared to the level of phosphorylation of said substrate in the absence of said candidate agent, wherein said increase in the level of said phosphorylation is indicative of the ability of said candidate agent to modulate the interaction of said NS5A polypeptide with said PKR protein kinase polypeptide.

18. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said NS5A polypeptide comprises a portion of the full length NS5A, wherein said portion contains the ISDR.

19. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said NS5A polypeptide comprises a portion of the full length NS5A, wherein said portion contains the PKR-binding domain of NS5A.

20. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said PKR protein kinase is induced by interferon.

21. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said PKR protein kinase polypeptide is selected from a group consisting of p68 kinase, P1, DAI, dsI, and e1F-1 kinase.

22. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said PKR protein kinase polypeptide comprises a portion of the full length PKR protein kinase, wherein said portion contains the NS5A-binding domain of said PKR protein kinase.

23. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said PKR protein kinase polypeptide further comprises a portion of the full length PKR protein kinase, wherein said portion contains the dimerization domain of said PKR protein kinase.

24. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said PKR protein kinase polypeptide comprises a portion of the full length PKR protein, wherein said portion contains the catalytic domain of said PKR protein.

25. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said candidate agent is a polypeptide that binds to said NS5A polypeptide.

26. (New) The method according to any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein said candidate agent is an antibody that binds to said NS5A polypeptide.

27. (New) The method according to claim 13 or 14, wherein said candidate agent is a nucleic acid that binds to the nucleic acid encoding said NS5A polypeptide.